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Livonia, retaining much of the Barbarity as well as Superſtitions of their Pagan Anceſtors: They have nothing of their own, but are meer Slaves to the Nobility, who give them certain Allotments of Lands to Cultivate, for the bare ſubſiſtence of their Families, the overplus being reſerved for their Lords, unto whom they are obliged to do certain Services at their Country Seats, in proportion of their Poſſeſſions they hold under them. It muſt be acknowledged that their Slavery is almoſt unſupportable; but the *Livonian* Nobility excuſe this hard Uſage with their Stubbornneſs, which is ſuch, that unleſs they be oppreſs'd beyond all Hopes or Thoughts of relief, they would ſoon turn out their Maſters, of which they have ſometimes given ſufficient Proof, when occaſion has preſented.

They are indeed *Lutherans* by Name, and there is ſcarce a Village but what has its own Church; but what with their Obſtinacy and Perſeverance in their Heathenish Superſtitions, and what with their careleſneſs and little regard of a future State, they have ſcarce any thing that bears the reſemblance of a Chriſtian, except it be Baptiſm; for as to hear Sermons, and to go to Communion, they are ſcarce ever ſeen at it, except it be by Compulſion, or for ſome Intereſt relating to the conveniencies of this Life. If they are asked the Reaſon, they alledge, that their Slavery and Drudgery is ſuch, that it is impoſſible for them to apply themſelves to Devotion. And to confeſs the Truth, this ſeems to be no framed Excuſe; for conſidering, that beſides the Daily Turmoils they undergo at Home for providing for their Families, they are obliged to do Services at the Seats of their Lords, whither they repair early in the Morning every *Monday*, and return not till late on *Saturday* Night; during which time they have ſcarce two Hours in 24 allow'd them for Sleep (if their Lords be good Natur'd, for the reſt give them ſcarce any intermiſſion) during which time they undergo ſuch incredible Fatigues and Drudgeries (both Men and Women) in cleaving of Wood, Cultivating the Ground, Thraſhing and Drying of Corn, that it is no Wonder, if they rather apply theſe few Hours on *Sundays* for Reſt than in Devotion. This inſupportable Slavery, their want of Reſt, and the Badneſs of their Diet, being nothing elſe but Rye Bread, dry

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dry Cheese and Water, is without Question the Reason, that tho' whilst the Men and Women are Abroad in their Lords Service, and lye without any distinction of Sexes these few Hours they have allow'd them for Rest in the Barns, yet they are so far from being sensible of those pleasing Motions, which are so natural to others, that it is next to a Miracle, to hear of a Bastard begot betwixt them; unless we would attribute this Defect to the Coldness of the Climate, it being certain, that in those Parts they are more regardless in this respect than the more Southern Nations; nothing being more common here, than for Men and Women to sit promiscuously at one long Table, in order to undress themselves, before they go into the publick Bath-stoves, where both Sexes are attended only by Women; and in private Houses, both Men and Women frequently enter the Bath-stoves together, without making any great Account of the Matter.

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As this Slavery renders them incapable of thinking of a future State, so all their Thoughts are bent upon this Life, tho' it be never so Miserable; which is the Reason that when they take an Oath at Law, they add this Curse, *That if they Swear False, the Curse of God may fall upon their Bodies as well as Souls, and that their Children, as well as every thing else that appertains to them, may feel the Effects of it, to the ninth Generation:* In *Esthonie*, and about *Riga*, when the Peasants are to take an Oath at Law, they put a Turf upon their Heads, with a white Staff in their Hands, intimating, that if they Swear falsely, then their Children, and Cattel may become as dry as the Turf and Stick. This as well as the putting of a Needle and Thread into the Graves of their deceased Friends, savours much of the beforementioned Pagan Superstitions of their Ancestors; but they have others, besides these, which may very well be look'd upon as the true Relicks of them. Thus they frequently perform their Devotions upon Hills, or near a certain Tree, in which they make many Incisions, and after they have bound them up with some red Stuff, offer their Prayers here, which always tend to temporal Blessings. Thus they go on Pilgrimage every *Lady-Day* to an old, ruin'd Chappel, two Leagues from *Kunda*, betwixt *Rival* and *Narva*, where they strip themselves of their Cloths; and after they have been Kneeling a while in the midst of

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the Chappel, they offer a Sacrifice of Fruits and Fleſh, for the preſervation of themſelves and their Cattel, for the next Year. The whole is concluded with Feaſting, Drinking, and Quarrelling.

Their Marriage Ceremonies are much of the ſame ſtamp; for, if a Peaſant marries a Laſs out of another Village, he fetches her from thence on Horſeback, ſhe imbracing him with her right Arm. In his Hand he holds a Stick cleft at the upper end, where he puts a piece of Braſs Mony, which is given as a Reward to the Perſon who opens the Wicket, through which he paſſes. In their return, beſides a Bag-piper, Two of his neareſt Kinſmen ride before on Horſe-back, with drawn Swords in their Hands, wherewith they ſtrike twice croſſwiſe the Door, thro' which they are to enter the Houſe, where the Marriage is to be Conſummated; and as ſoon as the Bridegroom is ſeated, they fix one of theſe Swords in a Beam over his Head, to prevent Charms, as they ſay; to prevent which, the Bride alſo, as ſhe paſſes along the Road, ſcatters ſmall Pieces of Red Woollen Stuff, eſpecially near the Croſſes, where croſs-ways meet, and upon the Graves of Unbaptized Children, who are here Buried in the High-ways. The only thing moſt worth taking notice of among ſo barbarous a Race, is, That after the Bridegroom and Bride are ſet down at Table with the other Gueſts, they don't ſtay with them till the end of the Feaſt, for fear of overcharging themſelves with ſtrong Liquor, but within half an Hour after retire to the nuptial Bed, where after they have made the beſt Tryal of their mutual Strength for two Hours, they return to the reſt; and ſpend the remaining part of the Day and Night, with Eating, Drinking, and Dancing; till what with Drunkenneſs, and what with Wearineſs, they drop down upon the Floor, and ſo fall a ſleep together. If the Bride has been able to ſave a little by her Drudgery, ſhe wares upon this ſolemn Occaſion, a Necklace of thin Plates of Silver round the Neck, of the bigneſs of a Crown Piece, and one of the ſame Metal hanging down on a Chain from the Neck upon her Breaſt, of the bigneſs of a ſmall Wooden Trenchar. For the reſt, their Garments are commonly of home-made courſe Woollen Cloth, the Womens Petti-Coats being like Sacks, without any Pleats.

Formerly the neglect theſe miſerable Wretches ſhew of their Salvation, was in a great meaſure attributed to the

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the Ignorance and Careleſneſs of the Country Clergy; but ſince by the Care of the *Swediſh* Kings, a Yearly Synod has been Convocated at *Rival*, for the regulation of Church-Affairs, and Examination of the Clergy-Men; it has been found by experience, that beſides their unfitneſs for Devotion, by reaſon of the conſtant Fatigues they are forced to undergo, their antient Idolatry and Superſtition, has taken ſo deep root among them, as not to be quite extirpated by the Art of Man; for ſuch is their Inclination for Sorcery, that they are of Opinion their Cattel cannot thrive without it; for which reaſon, Fathers and Mothers, among theſe Peaſants, are as careful to inſtruct their Children in it, as we do in the Cathechiſm and other good Morals. To elude the Effects of Charms, they never kill a Beaſt, or make a Slaughter, but they throw ſome part away, upon which the effect of the Charm is to fall; nay, they are ſo far entangled in Superſtition, that if within a few Weeks after Baptiſm, the Child happen to fall ill, or pine away, they Rebaptize it, alledging, that the firſt Name was not agreable to its Conſtitution, tho' very ſevere Laws have been enacted againſt it. The worſt of all is, that they are ſo Tenacious of theſe Superſtitions, and ſo obſtinate in the perſeverance of their antient Cuſtoms, that nothing is able to divert them from it. Of this there have been ſeveral Inſtances of late Years; for theſe Peaſants, as I told you before, being not permitted to purchaſe any Lands, but obliged to live upon the Allotments granted to them by their Lords, for the bare ſuſtenance of their Families, will ſometimes cut or burn down ſome Woods, and Manure the Ground, which produces good Wheat; this they hide for Sale; but if they happen to be catch'd, they are ſtrip'd to the middle, and ty'd to a Poſt, where they are ſoundly whipt with a Switch, till the Blood iſſues forth on all Sides; I ſay, there are many Inſtances of ſuch among the *Livonian* Peaſants, who rather than redeem this Chaſtiſement by a ſmall pecuniary Mulct of about 18 or 16 Pence, have choſen to ſubmit readily to the Puniſhment, alledging, that rather than introduce any Novelty of this Kind, they would ſuffer the ſame Chaſtiſement their Fore-fathers uſed to do before them.

CHAP.